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Biden suspends oil and gas leasing in slew of executive actions on climate change

PUBLISHED WED, JAN 27 2021 11:56 PM EST UPDATED WED, JAN 27 2021 12:06 PM EST
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President [Joe Biden](#) on Wednesday signed a series of executive orders that prioritize [climate change](#) across all levels of government and put the U.S. on track to curb planet-warming carbon emissions.

Biden's orders direct the secretary of the Interior Department to halt new oil and natural gas leases on public lands and waters, and begin a thorough review of existing permits for fossil fuel development.

In addition to the pause on leasing, Biden will direct the federal government to conserve 30% of federal lands and water by 2030 and find ways to double offshore wind production by that time.

The series of actions kick off the president's agenda to reduce the country's emissions and establish stricter targets under the Paris climate accord, the landmark agreement by nearly 200 nations aimed to mitigate climate change.

"We've already waited too long to deal with the climate crisis. We cannot wait any longer," Biden said during a briefing on Wednesday.

"Our climate plans are ambitious," Biden said. "But we are America. We are unwavering in our commitment to innovation."

On his first day in office last week, Biden had the United States re-enter the Paris accord. He also cancelled the permit for the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

During [Barack Obama's](#) presidency, the U.S. vowed to curb emissions between 26% and 28% below 2005 levels by 2025 but has failed to come anywhere near that goal. Progress on reductions essentially halted during the Trump administration, which minimized the role of climate change and weakened more than 100 environmental regulations in favor of fossil fuel producers.

Biden, who has assembled the largest-ever White House team of climate experts, has vowed to unveil more ambitious targets at the major U.N. climate summit this year in Scotland. He has also pushed to implement a \$2 trillion climate plan.

Biden's moratorium on oil and gas leases won't end fossil fuel extraction since industry leaders currently hold undeveloped leases. Drilling on public lands generates billions of

dollars in revenue but comprises roughly a quarter of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

Oil and gas producers have strongly opposed Biden's move and are expected to challenge the order in court.

"Penalizing the oil and gas industry kills good-paying American jobs, hurts our already struggling economy, makes our country more reliant on foreign energy sources, and impacts those who rely on affordable and reliable energy," Anne Bradbury, president of the American Exploration and Production Council, said in a statement.

Environmental groups, who have long pushed for the changes sought by Biden, praised the orders.

"We're thrilled President Biden is quickly honoring his pledge to stop new fossil fuel leasing of our federal lands and waters," said Kierán Suckling, executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity. "The climate and wildlife extinction crises demand this kind of bold, urgent action."

Biden is also establishing climate change as a national security priority and maintaining a focus on green job creation and environmental justice for those most vulnerable to climate change.

Biden is expected to sign additional executive orders to dismantle the Trump administration's climate policy reversals. But he will likely face constraints in implementing his massive economic plan with a [slim Democratic majority in the Senate](#).

Biden's climate plan includes goals to transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, cut emissions from electric power to zero by 2035 and reach net-zero emissions by 2050.